

V. CONCLUSION

The appearance of a place today is often no clue as to what happened there in the past. Sometimes the least impressive-looking spots turn out to have quite fascinating histories. In 1995 the Hessler Industrial Park was an overgrown lot sandwiched between two highways, and the Newark Light Rail Station was a clump of trees in the corner of an immense parking lot, surrounded by piles of asphalt. Yet just by plunging our shovels into the soil, we were able to find traces of people who lived in both of these places long ago. The Hessler Industrial Park was a campsite for Native American hunters ranging along the Christina River, and later part of a farm; still later it was part of a real estate speculator's dreams. The Newark Light Rail Station was at one time the location of a grand brick house known as Linden Hall, and that house was once a school notable for its progressive attitude toward the education of young women. Looking at the parking lot and the weeds, one would never think of the great debate nineteenth-century Americans waged over the proper

education for women, but the connection is there if we take the time to look for it.

Although the archaeological remains at both of these sites are too sparse and fragmentary to merit further work, we have suggested that a plaque be placed at the Newark Light Rail Station memorializing the Newark Female Seminary and its efforts on behalf of education for girls. It is, after all, interesting to know about the things

that once happened on sites that now look so completely different. In other places, such as the Route 7/Route 58 intersection, neither our shovels nor our documentary research tells us anything about the people who may once have lived and worked there. This silence of the record does not mean that nothing happened in such a place; surely thousands of things happened. Every place has a past. The past of some places, however, seems to be lost to history, and as hard as we look we can find out nothing about that past. But those places we can learn about become windows into worlds that no longer exist.

Every place has a past.
